

## **405 University of California Faculty to Regents: Stop Professors from Using University to Promote Hatred of Israel**

We believe that the Regents themselves must take decisive action to ensure that University policies proscribing such behavior are robustly enforced, since neither the academic senate nor campus administrators have been willing to exercise their due diligence in addressing a problem that threatens to do great harm not just to Jews, but to the entire University.

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Dear University of California Board of Regents,

We, the undersigned, are faculty members from a number of UC campuses, who are deeply concerned about the growing hostility and harassment targeting Jewish members of the campus community in the wake of Hamas' October 7th massacre of Israeli civilians. Of particular concern is the role played by individual faculty members and whole departments in fomenting the hostile, antisemitic climate that exists on many of our campuses, through their use of the University's name, facilities and resources to engage in anti-Zionist political expression, whose goal is to demonize, delegitimize, and ultimately dismantle the Jewish state.

At the November Regents meeting Chair Leib acknowledged with alarm the growing anti-Jewish hostility on UC campuses and underscored the contribution of UC faculty to the problem. He specifically noted reports of "discrimination in the classroom," "episodes of abuse" by faculty, and students' horror at hearing faculty praise Hamas' "unspeakable brutality" and seeing it "justified on many University websites." Chair Leib unequivocally stated that such faculty abuse was "in violation of the faculty code of conduct and our University policies," emphasizing, "We have no patience for faculty who abuse their positions and willfully violate our policies."

We greatly appreciate Chair Leib's public acknowledgement and condemnation of faculty who contribute to campus antisemitism by abusing their University positions and state resources to promote anti-Zionist advocacy and activism. However, we believe that the Regents themselves must take decisive action to ensure that University policies proscribing

such behavior are robustly enforced, since neither the academic senate nor campus administrators have been willing to exercise their due diligence in addressing a problem that threatens to do great harm not just to Jews, but to the entire University.

A glaring example of UC faculty flagrantly violating University policy by using their departmental status and the University's name and resources to promote political propaganda and activism – with complete impunity – can be found in the Critical Race and Ethnic Studies Department (CRES) at UC Santa Cruz. According to a recent detailed report, CRES faculty have been engaging in anti-Zionist advocacy and activism, as a department, since at least May 2021, when a statement pledging CRES's allegiance to "the struggle for Palestinian liberation," and committing its faculty to bringing into their classrooms an academic boycott of Israel that UC Chancellors unanimously condemned as "a direct and serious threat to the academic freedom of our students and faculty," was posted to the CRES website. Since Hamas' October 7th massacre, examples of CRES's anti-Zionist political advocacy and activism – all of them documented on their departmental website – have dramatically increased in frequency and intensity. These include incorporating counterfactual anti-Zionist propaganda intended to demonize and delegitimize the Jewish state and its supporters into their teaching and teacher training programs; promoting the statements of organizations committed to dismantling the Jewish state; shutting down their department as part of a "Global General Strike" against Israel and calling for students to boycott their classes; and promoting and participating in the "Shut It Down for Palestine" protest rally of Students for Justice in Palestine (SJP) that illegally blocked access to the campus and endangered the safety of students and staff.

Tellingly, less than a week after receiving a clear warning from the UCSC Provost highlighting UC policies prohibiting faculty from engaging in political advocacy in educational spaces, an invitation to join Faculty for Justice in Palestine (FJP), a group wholly devoted to anti-Zionist advocacy and activism in collaboration with SJP, was posted to the CRES homepage and linked to the FJP's founding manifesto, which was signed by more than 60% of CRES's principal faculty.

CRES's commitment to anti-Zionist political advocacy and activism, as a department and as part of its core mission, harms the University in many ways: it corrupts the most basic standards of scholarship and tarnishes UC's reputation as a world-class research institution; it coerces the consciences of students and fellow faculty by chilling dissent and marginalizing anyone who disagrees with CRES's political orthodoxy; it deprives students of accurate and crucial knowledge about a complex topic of global importance and violates their fundamental right to be educated and not indoctrinated; and, as Chair Leib has already noted, it incites animus and harm toward Jewish members of the campus community.

As the report points out, CRES's unabashedly political expression apparently violates several UC policies and California laws

that prohibit the use of the University's name, facilities and resources for political advocacy or indoctrination, and sanction the failure of faculty or departments to fulfill their contractual and fiduciary responsibilities. The fact that all of these incidents are still proudly displayed on CRES's departmental website is proof that neither UCSC's academic senate nor its administrative leadership is willing to take responsibility for holding CRES faculty accountable for violating UC policies or undermining the academic mission and basic obligations of the University to its students and staff.

To be clear, although CRES's flagrant misconduct is extreme, faculty throughout the University system are using their departmental status to engage in similar kinds of politically motivated and directed behavior. For instance, like CRES, the Ethnic Studies department at UC San Diego posted a statement to its website announcing that in solidarity with #standwithpalestine's call for a General Strike, the department would be "suspending normal classroom sessions on October 20th, 2023". At UC Merced, the Department of History & Critical Race and Ethnic Studies posted on its homepage a link to the department's statement on Palestine, entitled, "Genocide in Gaza: Context and Conversation," that vilifies Israel, rejects the characterization of the Hamas massacre as terrorism, and calls on the UC administration to "endorse the call for Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions."

We therefore urge you to take action to ensure that all UC policies prohibiting faculty use of the University's name, facilities or resources for political advocacy or indoctrination are strictly enforced at UCSC, and on all UC campuses. In particular, we recommend you request that each Chancellor submit an annual report of all violations of these policies and what steps they have taken to address the violations.

Thank you for your consideration,

405 Current & Emeritus UC Faculty, including 50 Distinguished Professors. The letter was spearheaded by Ilan Benjamin, Distinguished Professor in the Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry at UC Santa Cruz; Judea Pearl, Chancellor's Professor in the Computer Science Department at UCLA; and Shlomo Dubnov, Professor in the Music Department and Computer Science Department at UC San Diego, who serve as the Steering Committee for UC Faculty for Academic Integrity, as well as 402 current & emeritus UC faculty members.